(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and wiJl be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

**Programmes for blindness and cornea**

† 1334. SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the number of blind persons in the country is highest in the world;

(b) whether Government and voluntary organizations have announced any specific programmes in respect of blindness and cornea;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government have decided to grant financial help to State Governments for blindness and cornea; and

(e) if so, the quantum of amount provided to State Governments for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Government of India gives a one-time assistance of Rs. 5 lakhs for equipments/ vehicles and Rs. 1 lakh as recurring grant for payment of honorarium and POL to Eye banks set up in Government Medical Colleges and Regional Institutes of Ophthalmology. In case of Eye Banks in the voluntary sector, Government of India gives a one-time assistance of Rs. 5 lakhs for vehicles and equipments and Rs. 500/- per eye collected as recurring financial assistance.

(d) and (e) Under the National Programme for Control of Blindness in the current financial year, a sum of Rs. 65.00 lakhs has been earmarked lo State Governments for eye banks in Government sector.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.